

INSIDE AURORA: Fit Burg

By Scott Johnston

As you may have heard recently, Aurora has set the goal of being the most active and fit municipality in Canada.

It'll certainly help to accomplish this now that we're no longer all adhered to our couches watching the 24/7 televised Olympic coverage.

I'm not sure how they're going to measure our success. Maybe they can embed some hidden weigh scales in front of the counters at our local donut shops.

But regardless of how, or even if, it will be measured, how are we going to attain this lofty goal? I have some suggestions.

It's said that sitting for extended periods of time is bad for one's health, and that it's best to stand and move around.

Who better to demonstrate this than our elected officials? So, let's get rid of the chairs around the Council table. Not only will this set an example for others, but tired calf muscles may result in improving the pace of typical meetings, and possibly reducing them in length.

Note that this wouldn't apply to the visitor's seating in the Chamber. Forcing people to both watch a Council meeting and to stand? Well, that's just cruel.

Another documented way to improve your fitness is to park your car on the far side of a parking lot from where you're going, so you must walk a little further. After all, those extra steps add up.

Let's take this a little further, and kill two birds with one stone, by arranging for GO train parking to be located east of Bayview. It would eliminate all the parking hassles in the downtown core, and the extra hike to and from Industrial Parkway would burn off untold calories.

If we need space for this extra parking, I understand a sizable chunk of property on Wellington will be available shortly in that area, when Magna moves out of Town.

Aurora is well known for its annual parades. But why is it that some participants get to ride in cars or sit on floats, when many others are walking?

Let's level the playing field and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making the floats people powered. As an added benefit, a parade member would certainly keep warmer on a frosty November night if they had to push a seasonal sleigh full of elves, reindeer and toys up the hill towards Wellington.

A final opportunity to improve fitness levels has been made available by the Pokemon Go craze that has swept Aurora.

In this activity, players find and capture mythical creatures on their electronic devices at specific landmarks in Town. This has been lauded for getting people, if not off of their electronic devices, at the very least outside.

But it doesn't get them very active.

To counter that, they should be made to feel the effects of physically capturing them. This could be done by combining the program with a heart rate measurement device so that the Pokemon characters can be caught only after an accelerated heart rate has been reached. Say, 20% over the person's usual resting rate.

Participants could find the creatures, but their gadget would only capture them after the user had completed some jumping jacks, or run on the spot, or other similar cardio-based activity.

An added benefit is that it would provide not only entertainment to those watching them, but a health boost to them as well. After all, laughing is well known as an excellent form of exercise.

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